

Assessment of the Contribution of School Curriculum towards Youth Self-Employment in Kenya: Case of Youth Groups in Naivasha Sub-County

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Abstract

In Kenya, the economic growth rate has not been sufficient to create enough employment opportunities to absorb the ever increasing labour force of about five hundred thousand (500,000) people annually. About seventy five percent (75%) of youth are unemployed. According to Infotrak Harris February 2013 survey, the most pressing issue facing Kenyan adults today is youth unemployment. The Human Capital theory asserts that more education brings more earnings or better employment. Yet youth unemployment has been growing despite the government spending more than three hundred billion shillings annually on education. This study intended to assess the contribution of school curriculum on youth self employment in Naivasha Sub-County. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of school curriculum on self employment initiatives among the youth in Naivasha Sub-County. The research design was a descriptive study involving survey method. The study used primary data and secondary. The study population consisted of all the one hundred licensed youth groups with businesses in Naivasha Sub-County, Nakuru County. Stratified sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample from the stratified data. Based on the population size, a sample size of eighty groups was selected by using the Sample size table. Data was collected using questionnaires. A pilot study was done to ensure reliability and validity of data collection instruments. The data was analysed using SPSS computer programme version 12 and regression. The results were presented in graphs, charts, tables and figures. Data collected may be significant in that it may help policy makers improve on existing youth self-employment strategies. The results are that school curriculum has contributed to youth self-employment initiatives.

Keywords: Education, employment, Curriculum

Introduction

Like many countries, Kenya has since independence invested heavily in educations. This includes introduction of Free Primary Education (2003) and Subsidised Secondary Education in 2008. The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (Gathachi Report, 1976) report recognized large and increasing number of unemployed school leavers in the country, and the reality that self-employment was the only feasible solution for many of them. The Committee recommended the following strategies to deal with the imbalance between large output from the school system and low demand for the graduates: That the education system is reviewed to provide students with as many skills as possible for future self-employment (Republic of Kenya, 1976). The 8-4-4 system of education policy emanated from the assumption that it would equip pupils with employable skills (King & McGrath, 2002). They observed that the new policy would orient the youth towards self-employment. Yet Kenyan education system has been criticized for its inability to develop socially, politically, economically and well informed citizenry (Ntrangi, 2007). He noted that the Kenyan education system is more about 'schooling' than 'education.' Fredrick Iraki, (2011) noted that though the wisdom of acquiring formal education remains partly true today, there are harder realities facing young educated Kenyans. For instance many of them are still "tarmacking" in search of jobs. Further, those who find jobs have to be re-trained on the content or re-oriented towards real work ethics. According to Amutabi (2003), the 8-4-4 system of education introduced in 1985 still remains the most radical and perhaps mindless change in the education in Kenya since independence. The new education policy has been implicated in the worst strikes that engulfed a number of schools in Kenya during the year 2001 and general poor quality of education. Records from The Ministry of Youth show that youth unemployment has been rising steadily. According the recent census, Naivasha have a high number of

unemployed youth. Most of this youth are graduates from 8-4-4 system of education. Reasons why they are still unemployed are unclear. An empirical study with a focus on youth group self-employment initiatives has not been done in Naivasha Sub-County.

Literature Review

A formal education program is the process of training and developing people in knowledge, skills, mind, and character in a structured and certified program. The formal education system in Kenya follows the 8-4-4 system introduced in 1985. This system requires one to pass through eight years in primary education, four in secondary and four in tertiary level education. It focuses on vocational skills to enable those who do not progress to secondary and tertiary levels to create jobs or be employed in the informal sector. In 1981 the government appointed Presidential Working Party for establishment of second university in Kenya (the Mackay Commission) to find solutions to the problem youth unemployment. The Mackay Commission made many recommendations including a change of the education system from the 7-4-2-3 system to the current 8-4-4 system whereby the teaching of technical subjects, such as carpentry, home economics, and music, are emphasized in primary schools. The proposed system of education was implemented as from 1984. It is believed that this curriculum could prepare the youth for further learning and direct employment, either by self or others. The majority of primary school leavers are expected to become self-employed in the rural informal sector where most of them live. The government saw the need to provide a practical oriented curriculum that would offer a wide range of employment opportunities. Graduates of the 8-4-4 system at every level of the education cycle are expected to have some scientific and practical knowledge that can be utilized for either self-employment, salaried employment or for further training (Kerre 1987, Sifuna, 1985). However, the 8-4-4 system was bound to have many problems right from the start. First it was implemented quite hurriedly without proper piloting to show whether it would succeed. This was done especially against the good advice of curriculum specialists and experienced educators, who had foreseen the practical implications of this system, not in terms of relevance but rather in terms of resources and organization. In simple terms, what the students learn in primary schools under the 8-4-4 system of education is inadequate in helping them to become self-employed or creating positive attitudes towards post-school training which can lead to the acquisition of the necessary skills (Amutabi, 2003). Evidence from recent studies focusing on the impact of the changes embodied in the 8-4-4 on skills and opportunities of primary school leavers suggest that it has failed to achieve its objectives (Oketch, 1994). The new vocational subjects introduced in the 8-4-4 curriculum represent an attempt to provide a foundation for future specific skill training, rather than an attempt to impart skills which can immediately be used by the primary and secondary school graduates seeking wage or self-employment (Kerre's, 1987). Moreover, despite the existence of 8-4-4 education system for twenty seven (27) years, the rate of youth unemployment has been increasing. The reasons why youth unemployment is still increasing is unclear. This study therefore sought to examine the influence of change in school curriculum on self-employment initiative among the youth in Naivasha Sub-County.

Objective of the study

The following objective guided the study:

- (i) To examine the influence of school curriculum on self-employment initiatives among the youth in Naivasha Sub-County.

Hypothesis of the study

H₀₁: school curriculum has significant influence on self-employment

Methodology

The research design was a descriptive study involving survey method. This method was chosen because data to be gathered could not be directly observed as it is based on opinion of the respondent. The data collection instruments were questionnaires which are generally appropriate for quantitative research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population was a hundred youth's groups in Naivasha Sub-County. These are groups that have been operating licensed businesses for the last five years. The population was identified using Naivasha Municipal Council license records and data from Culture and Social Services department. The sample size was determined using the Sample size table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). According to the table a sample size of eighty groups was studied. Stratified sampling technique was used to obtain a sample from the population. It is an effective sampling technique since it's capable of making the sample representative of the population by giving importance to population segments that are significant to the study. It involved dividing the population into stratum. Then a simple random sample from each stratum was selected. The business areas were stratified into five zones (wards) which then constituted the target population for the study. Zone one was Lakeview, two was Biashara ward, three was Maraigushu ward, four was Viwandani ward and five was Malewa ward. The sample

elements were proportionately distributed among the strata (zones) and picked from each (zone) by use of random sampling technique. Based on the population size, a sample size of eighty groups was selected by using the Sample size table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Consequently, random sample study subjects were selected from each zone. Secondary data was collected from text books, government and published academic journals while primary data was collected through a predesigned self administered structured questionnaire which consisted of 5 point likert scales constructed with reference to Elsabawy (2011). Cronbach's alpha was calculated to measure the reliability / internal consistency of the instrument and the value was 0.709. The acceptable reliability co-efficient had been recommended as 0.7 and above. The face validity of the scales was assured through experts' reviews and literature survey. Data analysis was done through Pearson's correlation and linear regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 12.

Results and Discussion

Influence of school curriculum on self-employment initiatives

Objective I was to establish the influence of school curriculum on self-employment initiatives among the youth in Naivasha Municipality. The results show that overall, the youth were satisfied with the education they received in secondary school given that some of them developed an interested in business since they were in school, while others agreed that their teachers had practical knowledge needed to prepare them for business, the school attended had enough equipment for practical subjects the education received was focused on self employment, the teachers were friendly and informed, and the teachers used to encourage them to be self employed. The results agree with the findings by Mackay (1981) and Barro (2001) that human capital created especially at the secondary and higher levels of formal education, facilitates the absorption of superior technologies, and second, more human capital accelerates economic growth when the physical capital is increasing in the limited infrastructural areas.

Table 4: Regression results

Table 4.8.2 Coefficients (a)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Constant	4.054	2.563		2.355	.038
School curriculum	.438	.345	.675	2.790	.065

The R^2 statistic of 0.546 means that the selected factors (influence of the school curriculum, vocational training, and availability of youth funds) account for fifty four point six percent (54.6%) of the variation in self-employment among the youth in Naivasha Municipality. The $F_{\text{calculated}}$ value of 8.578 is larger than the F_{table} value of 2.7581 thus we fail to accept the null hypothesis that the selected independent variables fully explain the dependent variable and conclude that there are other factors that affect self-employment among the youth and which are not included in the study

Conclusion

The R^2 statistic was 0.546 which means that independent variables accounted for 54.6% of the variation in self-employment among the youth in Naivasha Municipality. The model shows that among the independent variables, school curriculum was the strongest predictor of self-employment initiatives among the youth in Naivasha Sub County. The results indicated that on average the youth were satisfied with the education they received in secondary school given that some of them developed an interested in business when in school, while others agreed that their teachers had practical knowledge needed to prepare them for business, the school attended had enough equipment for practical subjects the education received was focused on self employment, the teachers were friendly and informed, and the teachers used to encourage them to be self employed.

Recommendations

The government should continuously review school curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant in training learners on entrepreneurship and business skills leading to self employment initiatives

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